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NDF conducts Explosive Ordnance training led by U.S. Army

The Namibian Defence Force (NDF) is conducting an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) level-one training program led by the United States navy mobile unit in Otavi.

The purpose of the program is to strengthen Namibia's institutional capabilities by training future instructors to identify threats including landmines, detectors, air-dropped bombs and missiles. The participants will pass on their new skills by instructing other members from their respective units.

Captain Zakanjangua Korukuve, who conducts the training, said the aim is to establish an EOD institution in Namibia where NDF soldiers can be trained instead of sending them overseas to acquire EOD skills. "The plan is to be able to train our people in the country. Skills acquired through the training, with help from the U.S. government, will enable us to establish an EOD school where soldiers will be trained in the future," explained Korukuve.

Korukuve further said although similar EOD programs have taken place at the military base before, the current group of participants are doing extremely well. "We are doing very well and skills obtained through the training have enhanced soldiers' performance."

United States trainer Peter Chambers said the training is vital for Namibia as soldiers will be required to handle explosives when in combat zones. The 30-day training, which includes theoretical and practical work, allows soldiers to identify and destroy different munitions and chemicals that they have never used.

"They are also taught how to set up detonators and how to keep safe during an explosion ordnance incident. This is all done at a demolition demonstration range, using certified materials and equipment," said Chambers.

Chambers, however, explained that the most important aspect of the program is to ensure that soldiers understand the reason for the training and that they are able to highlight top safety measures during threat situations or when a threat is within close proximity of people and buildings.

"Saving people and buildings is always a top priority of any mission. So soldiers must be able to establish the reason for their mission and how it can be carried out safely and successfully," he said.

EOD training courses are issued on three levels. The first level allows soldiers to evaluate hazards of potentially unsafe munitions and determines the appropriate response to minimize hazard; level two EOD qualification enables the soldiers to conduct render-safe procedures and final disposal of any type of explosive ordnance. Level three qualification enables the holder to determine when it is safe to move, transport and dispose of single or multiple items or mines.

Upon completion of the EOD training, six graduate members will be selected to take part in a more intensive EOD course in the United States. Upon their return, they will be sharing their knowledge with others. The EOD training course is sponsored by the United States government and is conducted in other African countries as well, such as Kenya and Mozambique.

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